

Dialogue

Melanesianist Anthropology in the Era of Globalization

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Franz Boas's 1896 discussion of the limitations of the comparative method famously addressed the fact that similar things—totems, masks, methods of arrow release and fire making—turn up in different places, places often separated by vast distances. This fact is still with us, plainly, but in material forms that Boas might not readily recognize. Consider the following evidence.

Figure 1 is a picture of Kaipel Ka, who lives in the Wahgi Valley of highlands Papua New Guinea, standing next to a war shield that he painted with the handsome logo of South Pacific Export Lager and the more modest logo of SP Bia (South Pacific Beer), the domestic brew. The picture is almost identical to an image from Michael O'Hanlon's remarkable book, *Paradise: Portraying the New Guinea Highlands*, a catalogue published by the British Museum in conjunction with an exhibit that included the shield. The caption next to that image says, "Kaipel Ka sometimes fought alongside his maternal kin and so decorated his own shield with the South Pacific beer logo otherwise used on theirs" (O'Hanlon 1993, plate 14). A version of the image of Kaipel Ka and his shield also appears on the cover of a recent edited volume, *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia* (Foster 1995), as well as in the pages of James Clifford's pertinently titled new collection of essays, *Routes* (1997). Last year I ran across a version of Kaipel Ka's shield hanging from a bulletin board outside my Rochester office—an illustration for a flyer advertising a graduate degree program in the anthropology of art offered at University College London.

Figure 2 is an advertisement that came along with the insert of discount coupons in my local Sunday newspaper. It is an invitation to subscribe to a new series of Matchbox die-cast trucks, called Great Beers of the World. The trucks, issued monthly at \$14.95 each, are all models from the early decades of this century; each bears the logo of one of "the world's great



FIGURE 1. Kaipel Ka posing with a war shield that he painted. (Photo by Michael O'Hanlon. © Michael O'Hanlon; reproduced with permission.)

breweries.” The text announces that “The exotic bird of South Pacific graces a 1927 Talbot Van” (toward the bottom left of the figure). This exotic bird is none other than the bird of paradise, gracing the same logo that Kaipel Ka adapted to the design of the war shield used by his maternal relatives.

How do these visual data encourage people to think about the place of “Melanesia” and Melanesia “the place” in the era of globalization? How, more specifically, ought anthropologists to think about contemporary links or routes between Papua New Guinea and the United States—be-

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Die model shown actual size

MOOSEHEAD—Canada
1927 Mack AC

LOEWENBRÄU—Germany
1917 Yorkshire Steam

WHITBREAD'S
PALE & STOUT
WHITBREAD'S

WHITBREAD—England
1923 Tuba

GREENSBORO—France
1927 Renault 901

SOUTH PACIFIC—Japan
1927 Talbot Van

SHIMADZU—New Zealand
1927 GMC Van Van

FIGURE 2. Advertisement for collectible trucks. (Matchbox is a registered trademark of Mattel, Inc. *Source:* Insert in *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 1995.)

tween Melanesia and the world—including links and routes which, like the entanglement of a war shield and a collectible truck, might be accidental and ephemeral? What sort of comparative anthropology, and what methods of ethnography, does such a project invite if not demand? What sort of intellectual resources does current Melanesianist anthropology provide?

I want to suggest that the sort of social, economic, and cultural processes evinced by Kaipel Ka's shield and the Matchbox Talbot van—pro-

cesses of globalization—require Melanesianist anthropologists to think about at least two things: first, the shape taken at particular historical moments by the various flows of people, money, images, and technologies moving “in” and “out” of Melanesia; and second, the experiences of people living in particular localities when more and more of their daily existence is understood and enacted with reference to people living in other localities, indeed, understood and enacted as if all these people lived in one place at the same time. These two things go together such that Melanesianist anthropologists must ask, What are—and how can one apprehend—the multiple social processes that make possible an extreme if not wholly unprecedented relativization of consciousness?

TRACKING GLOBAL FLOWS, MAPPING MELANESIA

I am obliged to clarify what I mean by globalization, “the most fashionable word of the 1990s” (Barnet and Cavanagh 1994, 13). I support the common view, held by Harvey (1989) and Lash and Urry (1994) among others, that the social processes designated by the word *globalization* define not a postmodernity but, rather, a hypermodernity. Globalization describes the exaggerated tendency toward time-space compression that Marx and Engels identified in the *Communist Manifesto* as characteristic of the capitalist mode of production (see Chakrabarty 1992). That is, globalization implies a radical acceleration of the flows of images, people, money, technologies—subjects and objects, in short—across the face of the globe (Appadurai 1990). These flows move increasingly quickly along routes of increasing distance. But the network of flows is not fixed; nor is it symmetrical. There are blockages: not everything flows everywhere in all directions (see Hannerz 1996). As Lash and Urry put it, “Indeed the flows are highly specific to particular times and particular spaces. And these certain times and certain spaces, through which labor, capital and signs flow, are determined by very specific sets of institutions. These latter, which are initially institutions of economic regulation, figure at the same time as institutions of spatial regulation” (1994, 12). Not only are the flows particular to particular times and places, then; particular times and places are themselves the contingent outcome of these flows. It is not, then, that flows move “in” and “out” of Melanesia; rather, Melanesia is the always contingent outcome of these flows.

Accordingly, Melanesianist anthropology is badly in need of new maps,

maps of the channels through which ideas, images, objects, and people flow within and beyond the southwest Pacific. Put otherwise, Melanesianist anthropology requires a cartography of deterritorializations, exercises of tracking and following mobile subjects and objects that will conform to what George Marcus has called “multi-sited ethnography” (1986, 1995). Marcus has advised anthropologists to follow connections, associations, and putative relationships quite literally—to get up and move out of intensively investigated single sites. This strategy “might be understood as practices of construction through (preplanned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given an initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it” (Marcus 1995, 106). It is a strategy that requires ethnographers to become mobile enough to work in a potentially unbounded field site—and it thus inevitably provokes anxieties about the risks involved in turning away from traditional intensive, localized fieldwork practices (see also Clifford 1997; Stoller 1997).

I can imagine how this tracking exercise—a sort of self-conscious methodological fetishism (see Appadurai 1986)—could work with the South Pacific Export Lager logo. I might begin with its initial conception and design by cosmopolitan marketing agents and commercial artists in Singapore, headquarters of Asia-Pacific Breweries Limited, a joint venture of the Heineken NV international brewing group and owner of South Pacific Brewery. (Perhaps, however, the logo originated in Port Moresby with locally employed graduates of the National Arts School.) I would want to learn how the logo traveled to Kaipel Ka (or vice versa) and why Kaipel Ka thought it appropriate to decorate the shields of his maternal relatives, as well as his own, with the design (modifying it in the process by “twinning” the originally solitary bird of paradise). I would want to trace the connections between Michael O’Hanlon, Kaipel Ka, and the British Museum, and also trace the movement of the catalogue in which the photo of Kaipel Ka and his shield appears. And I would want to exercise my own capacity for reflexivity and trace the connections that brought the photo to editors at the University of Michigan Press as the cover illustration of *Nation Making*. But I would also have to track the movement of the logo from its origin in the South Pacific to the factories where Matchbox die-cast trucks are produced, and further to the homes of collectors whose aesthetic sensibilities or investment plans embrace the

South Pacific Talbot truck, that supremely odd instance of space-time compression. The result would be “a complex nesting of imaginative appropriations [of the sort] that are involved in the construction of agency in a deterritorialized world” (Appadurai 1991, 205).

Tracking and mapping exercises of this kind have yet to be done in any significant way in Melanesia, despite the sensitivity of Melanesianist anthropology since Malinowski to the circulation of pigs, pearlshells, and people (for one relevant historical approach to tracking, see Thomas 1991). Perhaps this cartographic shortcoming is attributable to the absence of a twentieth-century Melanesian diaspora on the order of the nineteenth-century diaspora to Queensland’s sugar fields: no Trobriand guest workers in Berlin; few Kwaio tourists in Los Angeles; no Tannese refugees in Montreal. Indeed, transnational flows of people through Melanesia often require passage through narrow bottlenecks, such as Port Moresby’s Jackson’s Airport, where the international arrival and departure lounges serve mainly non-Papua New Guinean travelers. Nevertheless, Melanesianist anthropologists like myself know very little about the various circuits through which Papua New Guineans do flow: military circuits that concentrate soldiers at Murray Barracks—with significant consequences, as the events of 1997 attest—and disperse officers to Canberra for advanced training; educational circuits that concentrate students in national high schools and disperse a small minority to universities in the Pacific (Hau’ofa 1994) and elsewhere; conference circuits that disperse teachers, health workers, and government and mission employees to international meetings and workshops; public culture circuits along which rock bands (sometimes with Australian Aboriginal bands), theater groups, and Miss PNG tour the country and beyond; and social movement circuits that integrate people into global networks of ecological, feminist, and human rights activism. We know even less about emerging circuits of mass media—television, video, radio, especially—through which flow a variety of images, many having to do with commodity consumption, that—however malleable, however susceptible to situational interpretation or recontextualization—nonetheless link Melanesians to a global culture of martial arts and action films, MTV, Japanese automobiles, Sesame Street games and toys, Christian evangelism and, of course, CNN. Thus the testimony of Sir Julius Chan just after stepping aside as prime minister in the wake of the Sandline crisis: “This was the first time, he said, that the age

of freedom of information had impacted on the way things were done in the country. Papua New Guinea had been big news on CNN and ‘for the first time in history our nation has been exposed to modern transparency’ ” (Murdoch 1997).

What Melanesianist anthropology apparently requires is what Ulf Hannerz has called “network ethnography,” an ethnography not (only) of partial connections but (also) of parallel connections—of “the way people become drawn into a more globalized existence” through involvement in “transnational linkages running in large part parallel to each other” (1992a, 47). Such involvement generates “groupings of people regularly coming together and moving apart, short-term relationships or patterns of fleeting encounter” (Hannerz 1992a, 46). These groupings and encounters serve as “the contexts in which globalization occurs as the personal experience of a great many people in networks where extremely varied meanings flow” (Hannerz 1992a, 47). So, for example, Papua New Guinea employees of SP Holdings travel to the Netherlands to apprentice as brew masters and Huli wigmen visit Spain for an exhibition of their craft at the last official Universal Exposition of this century. Viewed from the perspective of any one individual person, such networks and the meanings that flow along them must appear unique; viewed in aggregate, however, it is likely that “a pattern of parallel, crosscutting or overlapping connections” (Hannerz 1992a, 47) will appear.

What happens, then, to “Melanesia”—the descriptive and analytical construct—as a result of these exercises? I suggest that the resulting maps will define Melanesia as a shifting site in a network of global flows; that is, a sense of Melanesia as a “culture-area” will emerge speculatively, contingently, and ethnographically—more on this presently—by tracing out disjunct flows of images, objects, people, and money (Appadurai 1990). It might even be that Melanesia is distinguished as a global culture area by the limited spatial reach of its circuits. (After all, as Appadurai remarked, “not all deterritorialization is global in its scope” [1991, 205].) Or perhaps Melanesia is distinguished by the heavily unidirectional flows of its circuits: commodities, for example (raw materials aside), flow mainly “into” Melanesia for domestic consumption; exotic images flow “out of” Melanesia for consumption abroad (sometimes entraining a return flow of tourists, travelers, and anthropologists; see Otto and Verloop 1996).

In any event, the flows that will be mapped do not proceed haphaz-

ardly in an unregulated way, but instead are structured institutionally. Notions of core and periphery are *not* obsolete for this purpose, whatever one might think of Immanuel Wallerstein's vision of the world system (see Kearney 1995). The task, to borrow the words of Lash and Urry again, will be to determine "where and what sort of the 'cobwebs' of connections on these maps are becoming denser, and which are becoming relatively sparser" (1994, 24). From this perspective, the construct of Melanesia is not doomed to logical inconsistency—the hoary problem of defining a "unit of analysis." On the contrary, Melanesia can be recruited for use in a new project of comparison, not as a homogeneously conceived conceptual unit, but as the name for a historically distinctive configuration of flows within a global network of such flows (Hannerz 1992a). It would be possible, then, to contrast Polynesia and Melanesia not in terms of chiefs and big men, but rather as different configurations of human flows (compare Hau'ofa 1994). Likewise, it would be possible to map a distinction between eastern and western Melanesia in terms of the speed and direction of flows of people and money, thus exposing differences that ought to raise doubts about uniformly applying the discourse of globalization to "Melanesia."

Hannerz's call for a "network ethnography" has the great virtue of finding a usable past in the history of anthropological theory and method; he revives, for example, long-abandoned discussions of diffusion and network analysis. I want to suggest similarly, if only in passing, that it is not difficult to find a usable past in Melanesianist anthropology for addressing questions of globalization. Melanesianists, like Melanesians, have long concerned themselves with trade and exchange networks—"importing" cultures, *kula* "paths," and "ropes" of *moka*—that connect people in different locations and that define conduits for the flow of meaning. Indeed, the metaphor of "flow" itself has been deployed by both Daribi and their ethnographer, Roy Wagner (1986), as a means for apprehending social and semantic processes. Similarly, Aletta Biersack has argued that the indigenous concern of Huli, Ipili, and Duna peoples with intercultural encounters and regional contacts foreshadows a mode of "ex-centric ethnography [that] parallels the interests and concerns of those who focus on transnational flows" (1995, 44). In other words, Melanesianist anthropologists taking up the conceptual and methodological challenges posed by globalization do not need to start from scratch; there are useful ideas

—resonant Melanesian tropes and relevant analytical models—already in the toolbox. The challenge lies rather in adapting these ideas for use in studying social phenomena on a spatial scale greater than that of, say, the Massim or the Mountain Ok.

GLOBALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC METAPHORS

Comparative mapping exercises of the sort envisioned here are experience-distant; they would be pointless if not taken up as instruments with which to understand how globally extensive social processes configure lives lived locally. Globalization, as I mentioned, invites consideration of the experiences of people living in particular localities when more and more of their daily existence is understood and enacted with reference to people living in other localities, indeed, understood and enacted as if all these people lived in one place at the same time. Globalization does not simply mean a world economic system; that's old news. If there is anything new to report it has to be about the consequences of hyper-accelerating processes already ongoing, and prominent among these consequences is an unprecedented relativization of consciousness. Put differently, globalization is about imagination; it is about different identities construed with reference to people and places "out there." In yet other words—and this seems to be the consensus of recent writings that come out of sociology as well as anthropology (Giddens 1991; Lash and Urry 1994; Waters 1995)—globalization is a reflexive process, reflexive in the sense that it entails intensified self-monitoring, a critical appreciation of the new possibilities that radical deterritorialization yields for revising personal and collective identities.

What are the metaphors available to anthropologists through which to apprehend this reflexivity? And what sorts of ethnographic inquiry do these metaphors underwrite? For surely ethnography reenters here; not Marcus's ethnography of tracking and tracing, but, rather, an older fashioned ethnography of making sense of how others make sense of the circumstances in which they find themselves. Let me consider three metaphors or figures of speech, each of which advances an ethnographic understanding of globalized experience.

James Clifford (1988) has offered the metaphor of surrealism. His aim was to stress the creative process whereby people contemplate human alternatives through unexpected juxtapositions and disturbing syncre-

tisms. Clifford suggested that globalization—though he didn't invoke the concept—enables people to be aesthetically inventive, to partake of the “ironic play of similarity and difference” (1988, 146). Hence the example with which he concluded his essay, a scene from the well-known film *Tro-briand Cricket*: “The film takes us into a staged swirl of brightly painted, feathered bodies, balls, and bats. In the midst of all this on a chair sits the umpire, calmly influencing the game with magical spells. He is chewing betel nut, which he shares out from a stash held on his lap. It is a bright blue plastic Adidas bag. It is beautiful.”

There is surely something to be said for the metaphor of surrealism. It evokes how unexpected juxtapositions point to another reality, another set of cultural principles at work. This is unambiguously so with Kaipel Ka's war shields, as told by O'Hanlon: “Kaipel's own explanation of his use of the SP design was that he had been asked by senior men to incorporate a representation of a beer bottle on the shield, to make the point that ‘it was beer alone which had precipitated this fighting’. (The war followed the breakdown of negotiations for compensation after an inebriated Senglap [clan] man had fallen from a Dange [clan]-owned vehicle.) Rather than including a picture of a beer bottle, Kaipel decided instead to make the point by using the SP design as a whole” (1993, 68).

O'Hanlon continued with his own exegesis: “At one level, then, this design parallels those that express regret. At another level, there is also something appropriate in the use of beer. Beer drinking is often a ‘group’ matter, just as warfare is. As Marie Reay observed . . . ‘Clansmen fight together; they also drink together.’” Thus O'Hanlon made the point that the shield design signals another reality, a set of alternative principles for thinking about and representing corporate associations.

On the other hand, Kaipel Ka's war shields offer a caution about the metaphor of surrealism; for it is not entirely evident that Kaipel regarded his design as playful and ironic. Indeed it is not clear that he regarded it as anything but manifestly sensible in terms of Wahgi conventions for conducting and commenting on warfare. This is not to say that Kaipel did not or could not appreciate his shield as syncretic. Clifford thus rightly asked in his review of O'Hanlon's British Museum exhibit, “Why, one wonders, shouldn't people such as the Wahgi experience invention and hybrid processes as part of *their* ‘phenomenological reality’?” (1997, 182, emphasis added). But it is to say that anthropologists need to inquire about Kaipel Ka's understanding of his own agency. That is, the trope of

surrealism requires scholars to remember constantly that Our unexpectation is not necessarily Theirs—but it might be (see also Diaz 1994; Thomas 1996). Invention, as O'Hanlon has pointed out, "is an historical process which is likely to look different in different places and at different times" (personal communication, 1995).

An alternative metaphor for apprehending Kaipel Ka's shields and, more generally, the reflexive process of globalization is "cultural creolization" (see, eg, Hannerz 1992b). As a linguistic analogy, creolization suggests—unlike the image of juxtaposition or collage—jelling and blending, the emergence of something integrated and coherent out of the mixture of elements from previously separate languages. The metaphor is therefore well equipped to make the particularist point of both Boas and structural linguists: that the same item in multiple contexts might have very different functions and meanings. Consider again Kaipel Ka's war shield. The original logo of SP Export ("the Beer of Paradise") presents one bird of paradise; the war shield depicts two. O'Hanlon noted, "‘Raggiana bird of paradise war’ is the term for the most bitter type of conflict. The fact that a pair of birds . . . was represented . . . was also suggestive, since pairing is a characteristic Wahgi practice, and the groups who fight ‘Raggiana bird of paradise’ war are listed in pairs" (1993, 69). Thus one of O'Hanlon's friends interpreted the shield in intelligible local terms as a warning that the war between the Senglap and Dange clans was in danger of escalating to bird of paradise proportions.

Creolization is an optimistic metaphor. Like Clifford's surrealism, creolization emphasizes the inventiveness and creativity of subjects, mobile or not, in their encounters with global flows of images, objects, people, and money. Its Caribbean origins point to the triumphant "creation and construction of culture out of fragmented, violent and disjunct pasts" (Mintz 1996, 302; see also Walcott 1992). Transported elsewhere, the metaphor of creolization can thus do valiant rhetorical combat with the specters of "Coca-colonization" and "Americanization." But some caution must be exercised here too. As Mintz insisted, there is a very specific geography and history of appalling misery behind a metaphor that now lends itself to globally pervasive processes. Yielding to the temptation to compare the Caribbean and Melanesia as zones of creolization within a creolizing world demands also that the fundamentally different colonial and postcolonial histories at issue be contrasted. Similarly, in quickly embracing creolization because of its positive stress on cultural creativity,

anthropologists ought not to fail to recognize the often negative, sometimes horrific, fantasies spawned by globalization, fantasies that impel the flow of sex tourists to Bangkok, automatic weapons to Bihac, and Rambo videos to just about everywhere.

Stripped of its connotations of illusion and false reality, fantasy is a trope that heightens appreciation of the affective dimensions of globalized experience. Appadurai admitted as much when he remarked that “fantasy is now a social practice” and explained that “the power of the imagination in the fabrication of social lives is inescapably tied up with images, ideas, and opportunities that come from elsewhere” (1991, 198, 199). Globalization enhances the capacity of people everywhere to envision possible lives, to fabricate individual characters, to imagine national communities; for some people, but certainly not all, globalization also enhances the capacity to act on these possibilities. What the trope of fantasy thus makes visible—more so or more clearly than that of surrealism—is desire. And I suggest that an ethnography of desire is central to a comparative anthropology of globalization. (The work of Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, such as their *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts* [1991], is exemplary in this regard.) Melanesians, like people everywhere, desire some things, but not others; envision some possible lives, but not others. And, once again, Melanesianist resources are available to help anthropologists imagine how Melanesian argonauts imagine futures predicated upon “opportunities that come from elsewhere.”

Consider in this regard Nancy Munn’s provocative analysis of *kula* exchange as a telling example of a cultural practice through which “spatiotemporally distanced events become meaning horizons of an actor’s immediate situation or ‘present’” (1990, 1). Munn invoked Benedict Anderson’s now familiar notion of an imagined community in arguing that events surrounding interisland *kula* transactions—such as negotiations to attract a shell held by a partner on a different island—constitute regionality in experience, that is, *kula* transactions “engage apprehensions of a wider social milieu beyond that of the ‘moment’” (1990, 2). One might extrapolate from her discussion and explore the ways in which gift exchange more generally provides Melanesians both the practical means and the pervasive idiom through which translocality is rendered in experience “as part of a lived world” (Munn 1990, 2).

The trope of fantasy realizes two additional effects. First, like Clifford's surrealism, it highlights a reflexive agency on the part of subjects that is improvisational in nature. It warns anthropologists, especially Melanesianists, not to get swept up in the "glacial undertow of habitus" (Appadurai 1991, 200). It beckons them to pay ethnographic attention instead to the ways in which "agency is set free from structure" (Lash and Urry 1994, 5), that is, to how definitions of personhood that privilege the individual as the locus of autonomous agency circulate as elements in global flows of western ideologies. (And here again Melanesianists need to exercise caution with the trope of fantasy by not assuming individualist forms of agency as [already] universal.) I hasten to add that the outcomes of this sort of agency are not necessarily happy ones. Melanesianist ethnographers are as likely to be producing accounts of newly bourgeois consumers who regard their purchase decisions as exercises of autonomy as they are accounts of people motivated to act on newly imagined visions of human rights or democratic communities.

Second, the trope of fantasy focuses attention on how the imaginative resources for possible lives often arrive through mass media, especially film and video (for Papua New Guinea, see Foster 1997; Kulick and Willson 1994; Wardlow 1996). And this focus, conveniently, allows me to say something briefly about what a Melanesianist visual ethnography of reflexive agency might look like. One example is Dennis O'Rourke's by now classic film, *Cannibal Tours*, in which the fantasies of international tourists are set against the reflections of Sepik villagers on how they are seen by tourists and how perforce they see themselves. The other film, less widely known, is Les McLaren and Annie Stiven's *Cowboy and Maria in Town*, the story of two people—Kauboi and Maria—who have come to Port Moresby from elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Kauboi's story, in particular, communicates the sense of fantasy that I have in mind. With a homemade and battery-operated guitar and speaker, Kauboi entertains the passersby in front of the Steamships department store in Boroko, or occasionally rides on the back of a "Laki Moni Lottery" truck that travels around Moresby advertising the lottery. In his black cowboy hat and dark sunglasses, belting out original rock 'n' roll songs such as "Skyline Drive In," "Braun Rais," "Boroko Cell," and "Balus," Kauboi enacts a complex fantasy that globalization made possible. It is not a happy story. Even though Kauboi does get a contract with Chin H Meen Supersound

and does record a cassette—*Kauboi: Traim Tesol*—the film leaves one with a sense of despair over the direction in which Kauboi's fantasies have urged him.

Chin H Meen (CHM & Sons P/L), by the way, maintains an attractive website <<http://iccu6.ipswich.gil.com.au/comm/supersound/>>¹ replete with video and audio clips and interesting information about the operations of the company in the Pacific region as well as in Asia and the United States. The address of the site makes it clear that it is maintained in Australia, pointing again to the transnational media circuits that link Papua New Guinea into the extensive and far-reaching networks of major global corporations. The *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier*, one of two daily newspapers, is part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation; EM TV, the one and only national broadcast television station, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Australian Nine Network. The operations of these media corporations deserve the same attention that some anthropologists have given to the operations of transnational logging and mining corporations, for they establish the routes along which a variety of imaginative resources—cassettes, videos, game shows, horoscopes, editorials—find their way to an increasingly large and diverse audience of Melanesians.

In sum, what I am saying is that putting globalization and Melanesia together yields an agenda for getting ethnographically at the lived sense of fantasy, of learning how people in Melanesia, like and unlike people everywhere, rub their dreams and desires—their possible lives—against the exigencies of their actual lives. An ethnographic agenda is needed that will help anthropologists to understand the myriad shapes that imagination as social practice takes in contemporary Melanesia. Such an ethnographic agenda would account for both the global social processes and relativized consciousness manifest in the following excerpts from a letter published in the *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* above the name Jack Kagoi:

The new Shell television commercial showing a Tari man and his family dressed in traditional gear driving to a Shell station with a pig in the car, is in low taste, and portrays a very primitive PNG society.

In case Shell hasn't noticed, we Papua New Guineans do not walk or drive around in grass skirts carrying pigs with us. . . .

To the expatriate executives of Shell, we Papua New Guineans are working very hard to take our place in the modern world. . . .

We [Papua New Guineans] want the world to know that we are civilised and decent and can survive anywhere on this planet. . . .

As for me, I refuse to go to a service station where there are people shopping with pigs.

Melanesianists are not, of course, the only people who wish to dislodge Melanesia from anthropology's savage slot.

REVISING MELANESIANIST ANTHROPOLOGY

If anthropologists can reconcile Melanesia with globalization, can they reconcile anthropology as a discipline with globalization, too? What is distinctively anthropological in all of this except, residually, that Melanesian studies—in North America and Western Europe, at least—is mainly (if not only) the preoccupation of anthropologists?

The tracking and mapping exercises that I am proposing ask for something to which Melanesianist anthropology is not accustomed. Analysis of media flows will bring anthropology into contact with media studies and cultural studies. Analysis of flows of capital and commodities will bring anthropology into contact with the political economy and human geography exemplified by David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* and Saskia Sassen's *The Global City* (see Rodman 1992). All of this work strikes me as routinely multidisciplinary in its scope; like Marcus's multi-sited fieldwork, it pushes anthropology into arenas different from those in which Melanesianists have mainly worked.

Once in such arenas, anthropologists might find it useful to collaborate more aggressively, even to conduct ethnographic research as team members rather than as heroically solitary individuals (see Stoller 1997). (One suggestive example of such collaboration that also deploys an innovative strategy of tracking is Schieffelin and Crittenden's *Like People You See in a Dream*, a historical and ethnographic account of the movements of the 1935 Strickland-Purari patrol and the intercultural encounters of patrol members and highland Papuans with each other.) Such a move, in turn, might require new metaphors for imagining field sites and fieldwork—metaphors that highlight spatial discontinuity and dynamic collaborative processes. Emily Martin, in a related discussion, has offered two such metaphors, each of which strikes me as comfortably at home in a Pacific setting. She encouraged anthropologists to think of field "sites" as includ-

ing “different spaces discontinuous from each other” (Martin 1997, 146), that is, following Deleuze, as rhizomes—the points of which are connected in many directions, perhaps by subterranean stems, yet which suffer no perturbation by having their connections severed. In tracing the changing and convoluted patterns that such connections assume, ethnographers play a game of cat’s cradle, collective work in which one person is unable to realize all the patterns, but instead must pass the string figure back and forth on the hands of other players, shifting the figure’s form in the process.

At the same time, the sort of ethnography that I am proposing—with its emphasis on agency and imagination—ought to seem much more familiar to Melanesianist anthropologists. Of course, ethnography, like culture, is no longer the obvious monopoly of anthropology (not that it ever was). But it is here, I think, that anthropology is likely to leave a distinctive impress on the agenda of transnational cultural studies, Melanesianist or otherwise. Globalization does not mean the end of Melanesia, only its reconceptualization. Likewise, globalization does not mean the end of anthropology, only its reconceptualization as well. As Appadurai put it, “Anthropology can surely contribute its special purchase on lived experience to a wider, transdisciplinary study of cultural processes” (1991, 209). I never thought the issue was in doubt. But to do this will require opening up our fine-grained ethnographic accounts of Melanesian lived experiences to the flows of images, objects, people, and money that increasingly inflect these experiences.

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THIS ARTICLE *has benefitted from the comments of Mark Busse (who also called my attention to the letter from Jack Kagoi), Michael O’Hanlon, Nicholas Thomas, James Weiner, Geoffrey White, and two anonymous reviewers. I thank Alan Rumsey and James Weiner for the opportunity to present a version of the paper in July 1997 at the From Myth to Minerals Conference held in Canberra.*

Note

1 The address of the website has changed to <<http://www.supersound.pg.com>> now that Internet access is available through vendors in Papua New Guinea.

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Abstract

What is the agenda of Melanesianist anthropology in the era of globalization? I advocate thinking of Melanesia as a site for the ongoing configuration of global flows of images and ideas, capital and commodities, people and technology. The historical and cultural contingencies of this configuration define the specificity of Melanesia. In other words, this configuration defines Melanesia as something less like a fixed geographic location or broad culture area and more like a localized concentration of shifting, not-always-symmetrical social networks within a global web of such networks. Accordingly, a Melanesianist anthropology would ask how social linkages and relationships—old and new—channel a traffic in meaningful forms that is more or less continuous with previous patterns. It would ask, What altered and alternative forms of culture, community, and personhood are emerging at the site called Melanesia?

I accordingly propose how a Melanesianist anthropology might evolve by studying the (re)organization of social relationships effected through linkages into unprecedented and large-scale networks. Such an anthropology entails mobile, multi-sited ethnographic research geared toward tracking and tracing global flows as well as intensive, locally committed fieldwork sensitive to the varieties of globalized experience. The paper reviews some of the relevant intellectual resources available to Melanesianist anthropologists and considers the implications of globalization for ethnographic fieldwork.

KEYWORDS: Anthropology, ethnography, fieldwork, globalization, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea